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Sen. Van Woerkom's bill clarifies rules on Junior ROTC instructional time

LANSING – Students could count their time in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps classes as instructional time regardless of whether the classes were led by state-certified teachers under a bill introduced today by Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores.

“Requiring Junior ROTC instructors to have their teaching certificate in order for their classes to count as instructional time places an unnecessary burden on schools and students,” Van Woerkom said. “This bill would remove that burden and clarify the law.”

Senate Bill 1365 would waive the requirement that Junior ROTC instructors have to be state certified in order for Junior ROTC classes to count towards instructional time. Junior ROTC instructors, some of whom served in the military, are qualified to teach the Junior ROTC classes. In addition to military experience, all instructors receive training through the military that is specifically targeted to Junior ROTC classes.

The bill was introduced to address concerns raised by the White Cloud School District, which faced having to provide some Junior ROTC students with more classroom hours because their instructor was not a certified teacher.

For years, this type of instruction has been considered as instructional time but this practice was recently challenged. If passed, SB 1365 would maintain this practice.

The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Education.

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